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## **DSHS to administer state sign language interpreter contract**

**OLYMPIA** – The statewide sign language interpreter services contract will be transferred from the Department of General Administration (GA) to the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Department of Social and Health Services.

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) will oversee referral agencies and freelance interpreters providing sign language interpreter services.

GA has been administering the sign language contract since 2002. DSHS expects to receive bids from providers this April and sign contracts that will be effective July 1.

ODHH Director Eric Raff said DSHS clients consume 95 percent of all statewide sign language interpreter services from the current contract. GA currently contracts with approximately six interpreter referral agencies and has registered approximately 300 sign language interpreters.

ODHH has been working with several DSHS administrations, including Medical Assistance, Economic Services and Aging & Disability Services, to address both DSHS and clients' needs and improve the quality and delivery of services. The new contract under DSHS is expected to be made available to other state agencies which serve deaf and hard of hearing people.

Washington has approximately 650,000 residents with hearing loss – including 14,000 who are deaf.

ODHH information is available online at [Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing website](#).

This links provide additional information about [ODHH](#) and the [Washington Relay service](#).

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